

Whatcom County Council as the Health Board

**COUNTY COURTHOUSE
311 Grand Avenue, Ste #105
Bellingham, WA 98225-4038
(360) 778-5010**



Minutes - Draft Minutes

VIRTUAL MEETING - VIEW ONLINE

Tuesday, December 1, 2020

10 AM

Virtual Meeting

COUNCILMEMBERS

Rud Browne
Barry Buchanan
Tyler Byrd
Todd Donovan
Ben Elenbaas
Carol Frazey
Kathy Kershner

CLERK OF THE COUNCIL

Dana Brown-Davis, C.M.C.

Call To Order

Council Chair Barry Buchanan called the meeting to order at 10:01 a.m. in a virtual meeting.

Roll Call

Present: 6 - Rud Browne, Barry Buchanan, Todd Donovan, Carol Frazey, Ben Elenbaas and Kathy Kershner

Absent: 1 - Tyler Byrd

Public Comment

Buchanan opened the Public Comment period and hearing no one, closed the public comment period.

Director and Health Officer's Report

Erika Lautenbach, Health Department Director, stated that she had nothing new to report.

Greg Stern, Health Department, updated the Councilmembers on the following:

- A surge in cases of COVID-19 as reported by the Department of Health
- The Health Department's work with the school superintendents concerning school operations

He answered when he thinks a vaccine will be coming to Whatcom County and described the prioritization of administration. He also answered a question about the risk of an adverse side effect of the vaccine and the risk of vaccinating one entire segment of the population with the same vaccine.

Public Health Advisory Board 2021 Priorities

[AB2020-567](#) Update by Public Health Advisory Board on 2021 Priorities

Chi-Na Stoane, Public Health Advisory Board (PHAB), briefed the Councilmembers and spoke about the members of the board and how they contribute to the ideas of the board.

She described two of the topics they will focus on:

- Children and family well-being, including the Child and Family Task Force
- Racial inequities

She spoke about the Resolution affirming racism as a Public Health Crisis that was recently approved by the Council and the Health Board's role in supporting its action items.

Sterling Chick, PHAB Vice Chair, spoke about the focus on child and family well-being, the history of a movement to make children and families a priority on the State and County level, the Child and Family Task Force, and the effects of the COVID-19 crisis on children and adults compared to other disasters.

Stoane stated the other issues the PHAB will be covering are the impacts of COVID-19 on vulnerable populations, post-COVID-19 recovery, and public funding and support.

Lautenbach spoke about the desire to make progress on the Community Health Improvement Plan, she stated that the county has fallen backwards in a lot of health indicators in our community, and spoke about work with local jurisdictions to make a case for sustained funding for the future to deal with challenging problems that the community faces.

Kershner spoke about the issue of seniors in the community and Lautenbach and PHAB members including Stoane, Chick, and Steve Bennett answered questions about what other issues came up as potential priorities, and what Council support for resources in relation to the racial equity priority might look like.

Kershner moved to accept the priorities that the PHAB has identified for 2021. The motion was seconded by Donovan.

The motion carried by the following vote:

Aye: 5 - Browne, Buchanan, Donovan, Frazey, and Kershner

Nay: 1 - Elenbaas

Absent: 1 - Byrd

This agenda item was DISCUSSED AND MOTION(S) APPROVED.

Update on Well-being of Young Children and Families

[AB2020-569](#) Update on Well-being of Young Children and Families

The following people gave a presentation (on file):

- Astrid Newell, Health Department
- Judy Ziels, Health Department

- Debora Haney, Bellingham Public Schools
- Amy Hickel, Opportunity Council
- Chris D'Onofrio, Health Department
- Sterling Chick, Public Health Advisory Board (PHAB) Vice Chair

They answered questions about whether there is data for tracking the origin of families in the school districts that are falling behind to know if they were based here or have moved here, an estimate of how many people are behind on rent and by how many months, whether those people are negotiating on their own with their landlords or whether there is a process in place to assist them, and how many months of CARES Act help there has been for renters.

This agenda item was PRESENTED AND DISCUSSED.

Items Added by Revision

There were no agenda items added by revision.

Other Business

Browne spoke about emotional exhaustion and burnout and asked whether there has been discussion regarding burnout among the County Health Department staff and what can be done about it.

The following people discussed with Councilmembers and described what they have been doing in that regard:

- Erika Lautenbach, Health Department Director
- Astrid Newell, Health Department

Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 11:42 a.m.

ATTEST:

WHATCOM COUNTY COUNCIL
WHATCOM COUNTY, WA

Dana Brown-Davis, Council Clerk

Barry Buchanan, Council Chair

Kristi Felbinger, Minutes Transcription